

Developing Writing Materials Based on Eclectic Approach for Indonesian EFL Learners

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First Received: 2nd April 2018

Final Proof Received: 26th April 2018

doi:10.31002/metathesis.v2i1.708

Abstract

This study aims at developing writing materials based on Eclectic Approach for Indonesian EFL learners. The material is mainly developed and used for teaching essay writing for the third-semester students in the English Department, University of Islam Malang. It is also expected that the materials lower their anxiety as the findings of the preliminary study. This R and D research adapted development model proposed by Borg and Gall with the following procedures: need analysis, developing writing materials, expert validation, revision I, try out, revision II, and final product. The final product of this research is an instructional material for Writing III course which was developed by considering students' needs, levels, suggestions, and feedback from experts. It also made use of the principles of Eclectic approach to lower their anxiety in writing essay, such as providing much exposure toward the target language with less pressure, integrating the good sides of various teaching techniques, using real-life situation to make learning more comprehensible, considering the students' needs, teaching and introducing contextual grammar and vocabulary, and integrating all language skills.

Keywords: writing skill, instructional material, eclectic approach

Introduction

Writing is considered as the most challenging skill to master because it requires complex linguistics knowledge. A good piece of writing means successfully delivers the intended message to the readers with no grammatical errors. Many believed that writers should have gone through several writing stages before completing the final product, it is known as process writing. While

other, also believed that students can produce final draft only by analyzing the essay structure of the given example. Those approaches have their own strength and weaknesses.

A study conducted by Kurniasih (2013) and Huwari & Aziz (2011) revealed similar finding that EFL learners experience high anxiety to write in English in various condition, such as writing the thesis, journal article, assignment. Furthermore, Kurniasih (2013) also found that there are some factors causing writing anxiety, such as linguistics difficulties, lack of topic knowledge, insufficient writing technique, insufficient writing practice and many more. Indeed, mastering the English structure and writing mechanics needs lots of practices. Therefore students should get enough time practice. In English Department of University of Islam Malang, writing courses are offered for the fourth semester namely Writing I, II, III, and IV. This study focuses on developing materials for Writing III course because the lecturers prefer to compile materials from different sources, and there is no writing book written by the lecturer. So, it is going to be the first writing book to be used in the class as the main reference.

The success of teaching and learning is not only determined by the teaching techniques used by the teachers but also by the quality of the textbook. Most of the teachers make use of a compilation of material taken from many writing textbooks and internet resources. As a matter of fact, most of the writing textbooks written by native speaker fail to connect the topics with the students' life, and it becomes one of the sources of writing difficulties and anxiety if the students are asked to write essays for unfamiliar topics. Nunan (1991) stated that the available materials sometimes do not matter commercial materials sometimes do not match the students' needs and real-life condition. He suggested for teachers to create their own instructional materials to fulfill the students' needs and interest in order to be able to increase their motivation to learn and join the class.

As mentioned earlier that students still find that writing makes them anxious due to some reasons, it is crucial to develop writing materials to meet their needs and lower their anxiety. This book is developed following the principles of the

eclectic approach. An eclectic approach is an approach which integrates the good side of various teaching techniques. It has some salient features, such as providing much exposure toward the target language with less pressure, integrating the good sides of various teaching techniques, using real-life situation to make learning more comprehensible, considering the students' needs, teaching and introducing contextual grammar and vocabulary, and integrating all language skills (Fachrurazy, 2011; Kumar, 2013).

Method

This section deals with research method employed in this study which includes the detail explanation of model of development proposes by Borg and Gall (1983), the instrument, and data analysis.

Model of development

As mentioned earlier that this research followed the model of development proposed by Borg and Gall (1983), the detail explanation of each stage was given below:

Need analysis

The researchers conducted needs analysis by distributing the questionnaire to the fifth-semester students because they have taken Writing III course in the third semester. It is expected that they can give enough and meaningful information and contribution. The questionnaire consisted of 18 objective questions which fall into seven categories (the benefit of writing course, the content of writing materials, topic preference, learning organization, peer feedback, and classroom activities). It used Likert scale, strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It also consisted of one subjective question about their expectation towards the effective writing materials. Furthermore, the researchers interviewed three writing lecturers who have been teaching writing course for many years.

Developing writing materials

In the process of developing the writing materials, the researchers accommodated the findings of the need analysis. The researcher started developing materials by determining the learning objectives, organizing the structure of the book (from the brainstorming activities, main activities, and closing activities), writing and selecting essay models, creating tasks, designing grammatical focus and vocabulary exercise, and completing the appendix (scoring rubric, peer editing rubric and self assessment rubric).

Expert validation

To evaluate the quality of the product, the researchers selected one expert in English Language Teaching, especially in teaching writing course. She is a lecturer in English Department, University of Islam Malang, and has been teaching writing for seven years. The expert validator evaluated the materials by using a form to check whether the product has met the criteria for good writing materials for the users.

Revision I

The researcher revised the first draft based on the feedback obtained from the expert validator.

Try-out

After the materials have been revised, the researcher did the try-out to collect information whether the product helped students to write essay easily and increased students' interest towards the writing course. Furthermore, it was intended to see if the materials reduce students anxiety in writing.

Revision II

After the try-out, the researcher did the second revision based on the students' responses and experiences. They may have experienced difficulties or find unclear things that need to be revised in order to meet the learning objectives mentioned at the beginning of the unit.

Final Product

After completing the second revision, the research produced the final draft that was ready to be published and mainly used for the teaching of Writing III in the English Department, University of Islam Malang.

Research Instrument

The researchers used questionnaire and interview in the need analysis stage to know the students' needs and writing lecturers' expectation and suggestion towards effective writing materials. Furthermore, the researchers also used a questionnaire to validate and evaluate the quality of the writing materials. It was developed by Brown (2001), and it consists of ten aspects including the topic organization, content, coverage, language, instruction, example, exercise, and other aspects. This questionnaire does not only have subjective questions but also provided with suggestions column to give comment and review of the materials. In the try-out stage, the researcher made use of the questionnaire to know the students' response to the writing product and to know if the product can lower their anxiety in writing.

Data Analysis

To analyze the obtained data, the researcher employed different ways for different purposes. The data obtained from need analysis questionnaire, expert validation form and try-out questionnaire were calculated in the form of a percentage. The data obtained from the subjective question in the need analysis questionnaire and interview was analyzed and classified based on their similarities.

Furthermore, the criteria below in Table 1 were used to determine the quality of the product.

Table 1. Evaluation Criteria

Score	Qualification	Discussion
90% – 100 %	Very Good	No need revision
75% – 89 %	Good	Need revision
65% – 74%	Enough	Need revision
55% - 64%	Poor	Need revision
0% - 54%	Very Poor	Need revision

The result of expert validation and try-out was used to revise the writing materials.

Findings and discussion

This section presents the result of the data obtained from the need analysis, expert validation, and try-out stage.

The result of need analysis

Two instruments were used to gather data about the students' needs. The need analysis questionnaire consisted of 18 objective questions and one subjective question can be summed up that students perceived that good writing material that can lower students' anxiety should have eight criteria, they are: 1) comparison of essay organization for different types of essay, 2) planning stages and explanation of essay analysis using mind-mapping, 3) the analysis of 'good' and 'bad' essay examples, 4). contextual or familiar topics/issues, 5) grammar and vocabulary exercises for a specific type of essay, 6) glossary of difficult and scientific words, 7) games or fun activities to generate ideas, 8) interesting design (colorful layout and pictures).

From these findings, the researchers developed the writing materials consisting of three units (Unit I: Essay Organization, Unit II: Opinion Essay, Unit III: Argumentative). As this material was produced for Writing III course (3-credit

course), the researchers developed the materials in accordance with the course syllabus. The lecture was conducted for 16 meetings for one semester with 100 minutes/meeting. Each unit consists of Brainstorming Activities, Main Activities, and Closing Activities. The researchers accommodated the principles of eclectic approach in the process of designing the writing materials, such as integrating some language skills in one unit, using contextual examples, providing grammar focus and vocabulary exercise, and employing various techniques. At the end of the materials, the researchers attached some appendices, such as the scoring rubric, peer editing checklist, self-editing checklist, and guideline for debate activities which is used to generate ideas before writing an argumentative essay.

The result of expert validation

After completing the first draft, it was given to the experts to be evaluated using the validation instrument adapted from Brown (2001) consisted of ten aspects of thirty-five statements. The expert evaluated by scoring from 1-5 for each item since the validation instrument used five liker scale (1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4= agree, 5=strongly agree). The researchers analyzed the feedback and comment from the expert as a guideline to revise the product before going further to the try-out stage. The overall result of the expert validation revealed that materials were categorized good (74%) with some revisions. Detail explanation of each aspect is given below:

The experts admitted that the learning objectives of the developed materials were clear and in line with the learning objectives mentioned in the syllabus. Next, the topics were suitable for the social context of the students and are relevant to the writing subject, especially the type of essays. Furthermore, the presentation and the sequence of the materials are in line with the organization of materials in the syllabus. The materials contain various and interesting exercises that help students to develop their writing skill. As it is expected by most of the students, the materials cover some writings aspects, such as language, content, and rhetoric. In addition, the language is clear and the material is suitable for the students' level. The materials are completed with the grammar focus which is relevant to the type of essays being discussed.

Then, the instructions, the explanation, and essay models are clear which help students to understand the concept easily. The materials encouraged the students to work individually and collaboratively. The last aspect covers some questions about the design of the materials such as the layout, the choice of fonts and the fonts size, the consistency of the spacing line, subheading, and title, the arrangement of the materials, and many more. Based on the score given by the validators, the researchers need to do quite a lot of revision in this part to make the book more interesting which can lower the students' anxiety.

Even though the overall result of expert validation indicated that the product was good, but there are some points to be revised, such as 1) making the instructions simpler and clearer, 2) rearranging the order of some exercises, 3) providing more essay models, 4) using only two to three fonts in the book, 5) adding more pictures and colorful layout. Furthermore, the grammatical items and vocabulary discussed in the book should be very practical and related to the students' needs. Finally, the researcher revised the first draft before doing the try-out.

The result of try-out

The try-out was conducted after the revision stage was accomplished. To know the students' responses towards the developed materials, the researcher used a questionnaire consisting of 11 questions. The try out was limited only to one Unit III: Argumentative Essay in four meetings. The researchers acted as the writing lecturer. At the end of the meeting, the researchers distributed the questionnaire to get more information whether the materials have met the criteria of a good book or some revisions need to be made. The result of the try-out indicated that the materials are attractive, relevant to their needs and real-life situation, and suitable to their level. Furthermore, essay models and exercise help them to write well and improve their writing skill, grammar knowledge, and vocabulary. The overall score showed that the book was good (73%) and needed to be improved in some aspects, like the font size, giving more pictures, using more colorful design, and revising mistyping words.

Discussion

The aim of this R and D research is to develop writing materials based on the Eclectic approach to Writing III course based. It is expected that the materials can lower their anxiety in writing, as many researches revealed that EFL learners experience high anxiety in writing English essay in various conditions (Kurniasih, 2013; Huwari, & Aziz, 2011). As mentioned earlier that the writing materials are developed based on Eclectic approach, the researchers accommodated its principles in order to create effective and interesting writing materials. For example, in Unit II: Opinion Essay, the researchers made up of one cooperative learning techniques, namely Talking Chips to provide opportunities for the students to express ideas as well as exchange ideas in groups. It was done to help students find ideas before writing the essay. Then, the students completed the outline and submitted to be checked by the lecturer. In this unit the researcher used process writing approach. In Unit 3: Argumentative Essay, the brainstorming activities is started with a picture of two students who are arguing about the achievement of students with different learning styles. In different part of the book, students are instructed to complete a debate in classroom situation about 'separating class for low and high students'. Those pictures illustrate the concept of the argumentative essay. Furthermore, the implementation of Full Day School (FDS) in Indonesia becomes the main activity before the students write an argumentative essay. All students took active roles in the classroom during the debate session by being judges, timekeeper, chairperson, affirmative and negative team members, and audiences. The activities described above are the integration of some skills in the writing class and some approaches in writing class. The used of contextual topics, in this case, FDS, help students to find ideas easily since FDS became the hot issue in Indonesia.

The expert validators and the students showed positive responses towards the analysis of good and bad essay models in order to understand the concept very well. The result also indicated that the writing materials help students to overcome their problems in writing because the materials are developed based on their needs, levels, suggestions, and comment and also accommodated the expert suggestions. The used of collaborative activities to generate ideas through

discussion and debate provided scaffolding which makes the writing process easier. Nurdin (2009) stated that interaction among students allows them to share ideas, to exchange information, and to build mutual understanding.

Grammar and vocabulary exercises included in the materials aim at improving students linguistics knowledge to write a good essay, as a study conducted by Kurniasih (2013) found that the main cause of writing anxiety is the lack of linguistic knowledge. In addition, the experts scored four points for this statement in the expert validation form. The researchers also used examples and mind mapping to explain the concept as it is suggested by the students in the need analysis stage, and its effectiveness is evaluated by the experts.

The last procedure of model of development was completing the final product of this study after making revision based on the experts and the students' suggestion. This study proved that writing has close relationship with the students' psychological side when students are anxious they tend to find difficulties producing good essays, but they will produce good essay if their anxiety is low, it is in line with a study conducted by Kurniasih (2017) which correlate the students' writing anxiety and their writing performance. Therefore, it crucial to develop writing materials which accommodate the students' affective side and the product of this research will be used in Writing III course, especially in the English Department, University of Islam Malang.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The final product of this research is an instructional material for Writing III course which was developed by considering students' needs, levels, suggestions, and feedback from experts. It also made used of the principles of Eclectic approach to lover their anxiety in writing essay, such as providing much exposure toward the target language with less pressure, integrating the good sides of various teaching techniques, using real-life situation to make learning more comprehensible, considering the students' needs, teaching and introducing contextual grammar and vocabulary, and integrating all language skills.

The developed writing material comprises of three units based on the material in the syllabus (Unit 1: Essay Organization, Unit II: Opinion Essay, Unit III:

Argumentative Essay). Each unit contains Brainstorming Activities, Main Activities, and Closing Activities completed with (good and bad examples of Essay), explanation of the concept using mind mapping and examples, grammar focus and vocabulary exercise, fun activities to generate ideas, and stages of writing skills. It is completed with scoring rubrics, self and peer editing checklist. Expert validation and try-out session were done to evaluate the quality of the instructional material. Revisions have been made based on the obtained feedback, suggestions and comments.

The process of this developmental research has not ended yet; the researchers are open to any suggestions in the future. It is expected that further researcher can do experimental research to know the effectiveness of this products.

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